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ABSTRACT

Two international meetings on distance education are summarized in this report. The first, a preparatory seminar on "Staff Development for Distance Education," was held in Berlin to give African participants an opportunity to meet prior to attending the 12th World Conference of the International Council for Correspondence Education (ICCE) in Vancouver. Seminar activities centered around a working paper, "Co-operating at a Distance," in which J. Hakemulder presented practical guidelines for action oriented programs. A brief description of the ICCE conference is then provided, which includes observations on the status of distance education by representatives from Latin America, the United States, Canada, the USSR and Eastern Europe, Scandinavia, Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, the Far East, and Australia. The keynote address by Kevin C. Smith of the University of New England (Australia) is noted, and highlights of the plenary and parallel sessions that followed are given. Annexed materials, which make up about half of the report, include a list of participants in the Berlin seminar; an outline of the basic literature on distance education by B. Holmberg; the text of the keynote address, "Putting the Student First"; and a list of documents distributed by the German Foundation for International Development (DSE). (LMM)

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CONTENTS

		Page
	Preface	5
1.	Berlin Pre-Conference	8
2.	ICCE Twelfth World Conference	17
ANNEX		
	List of Participants (Berlin Conference)	27
	Basic literature of distance education (B. Holmberg)	29
	"Putting the Student First" (Kevin C. Smith)	30
	List of distributed Documents by DSE	53

PREFACE

In December 1981 a Round-Table Talk of Distance Education Experts was held at the Fernuniversität in Hagen, Federal Republic of Germany, sponsored by the German Foundation for International Development - DSE. (see : "Co-operation at a Distance", Working Paper GP 22-16-82).

Convinced of the utmost importance of Distance Education in the development and transfer of knowledge and skills, especially in developing countries, DSE planned a preparatory Berlin-Seminar to be held prior to the 12th World Conference of the International Council for Correspondence Education (ICCE) held in Vancouver, Canada (June, 1982).

The objective of the above mentioned seminar in Berlin was to give African participants an opportunity to meet before the World Conference commenced to enable them to prepare action-orientated programmes in Vancouver and try to find there the financial and expert support for the plans at the World Conference. The topic for the Berlin Conference was : "Staff Development for Distance Education", as lack of adequate staff is one of the major problems in African Distance Education Institutions.

Seven experts from Africa and a similar number from Europe were invited to attend the Seminar. (List of Participants : ANNEX 1).

Following the Berlin Seminar, the African and two of the European participants flew to Vancouver (Canada), to participate in the 12th World Conference of the International Council for Correspondence Education (ICCE), which was held from 6 to 16 June, 1982.

A conference book "Learning at a Distance" - A World Perspective - had been distributed in advance to all participants. ICCE had felt the need for improving the quality and effectiveness of its activities. The book has to be regarded as part of the response of the Council to that challenge. It was planned by a programme committee, which used a version of the Delphi technique to map out the field of distance education, in identifying topics of special interest, and choosing contributors to write about them. The book includes papers and extracts from over 120 authors from some 25 countries.

The ICCE Conference brought together more than 400 educators, scientists and educational planners, from over 40 countries to discuss and share information on the theme of learning at a distance. Among the delegates were educators working in a wide variety of areas : open universities in the industrialized world, massive literacy and rural improvement projects in developing countries, television and radio projects, elementary and secondary school correspondence programmes, and computer assisted instruction. Representatives from UN organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD - "World Bank") and also from private consultancy organizations participated in the Conference.

Slowly the world is beginning to realize that traditional educational methods are both expensive and exclusive. Traditional learning is simply not able to meet the educational challenges of the future."Distance methods are really the only important changes we will see in education for the next 50 years". (Prof. Don Swift, U.K.). Distance education is an immediate way of creating literacy and improving agriculture in developing countries : a way of training people efficiently in high technology skills, in times of rapid modernization. It also serves to break down the concept of education as something that ends when a student leaves university.

But the future of distance education remains in a number of countries mired in old biases, hampered by the lack of relevant examples to follow, and plagued by chronic underfunding. The economic problems of distance education make implementation most difficult in the countries where it is most important. Countries with low levels of education usually don't have the resources to spend on the technological hard-ware necessary for the programmes they need.

Therefore it has been very important that the assistance of DSE enabled a group of African Distance Educators to participate in the ICCE Conference.

Jan R. Hakemulder
(UN/ECUTAF Consultant)

I. BERLIN PRE-CONFERENCE (2 to 7 June, Villa Borsig - Berlin-West)

Dr. Johannes Heising, Head of the Higher Education Section of DSE, cordially welcomed participants from Africa and Europe on behalf of the German Foundation for International Development. He explained that in organizing seminars, workshops and training sessions in African countries, he became more and more interested in the work the Distance Education Unit of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa was doing. DSE - aware of the importance of distance techniques for African development - decided at the end of the contract period of Dr. Hakemulder, the UN consultant from The Netherlands in the unit, to co-operate with ECA in organizing an International Seminar, with participants from Africa, Asia and Europe, in September, 1979. The report under the title "DISTANCE EDUCATION FOR DEVELOPMENT" has led to many reactions from interested educators and planners.

In a Colloquium at the Fernuniversität (Hagen, Federal Republic of Germany) in December 1981 it was decided to organize a pre-conference for African representatives in Berlin-West, prior to the Twelfth World Conference of the International Council for Correspondence Education (ICCE) which would take place in Vancouver, June 1982.

The leading Working Paper at the Berlin Conference "CO-OPERATION AT A DISTANCE" proposed action orientated programmes, based on data assembled from the ECA Distance Education Unit, research and experiences from field trips by the ECA Consultant, and opinions expressed at the conferences in Addis Ababa and Hagen. Based on the up-dated facts, it seemed possible to discuss the conclusions and plans in the Working Paper.

In his statement Professor Otto Peters, Vice-Chancellor of the Fernuniversität and Vice-Chairman of the ICCE, stressed

the point that plans had to be developed and decided upon in Vancouver. He was grateful to DSE in general, and Dr. Heising in particular for organising this Berlin Pre-Conference and sponsoring African participants to attend the World Conference of the ICCE. Mentioning the general importance of the methods of Distance Teaching, Prof. Peters referred to ancient times where priests kept knowledge secret and only a few disciples were informed. The result was oral teaching and keeping information by memorising it. Teaching had to be adjusted to new situations, because more students had to be trained and led to group and class instruction, like in ancient Egypt.

However, knowledge at the moment is no longer restricted and is open to everybody and this is the reason why other media has to be used. Already 15 Open Universities are playing their part in democratizing higher education. This strategy has much support, but also here and there encounters resistance. Difficulties arise because the approach is a break with tradition and this can endanger the project. There is, however, no alternative. Professor Peters' message to the meeting is, that we are compelled to think and experiment in this new field. This we have to keep in mind in developing staff. It will be a challenging point in the meeting.

During the introduction of the participants many thanks were directed to DSE. Especially regarding the contents of the Working Paper, "Co-operating at a Distance" written by Dr.J. Hakemulder on request of DSE, which was highly praised at the meeting. Especially Mr. Chukwu (Nigeria) challenged the meeting to start straight away on the basis of this paper by :

i) Selecting and adding points;
ii) Listing the needs in comparison with the paper;
iii) Giving comments;
iv) Developing a strategy;
v) Discussing funding the project(s);
vi) Starting a task force

Professor Holmberg (Director of the Fernuniversität Institute for Research into Distance Study) presented an introduction in which he stressed the point that we had to come down to earth in our deliberations. For this reason he complimented DSE and the author of the working paper, which had practical and action orientated guidelines.

The question to be answered is : How to approach the whole situation. Professor Holmberg presented the following criteria :

1. a) *The Large Scale Approach : Courses to be used for thousands and thousands of students;*
   b. *The Small Scale Approach : Courses developed for just a small target group (Example : The University of New England, Australia, where professors are writer/tutor for courses for about 50 students).*
   The question is : what do we want, what do we need. The advantages of the large scale approach are not only the provision of courses of a high quality but also it is a more econorical method. The small scale approach provides a better personal contact between the writer-tutor (who is the same person) and the student.
2. a) *Degree Study : Courses lead students to obtain a degree/ diplome;*
   b) *Informal Education : These courses do not necessarily lead to a diplome or degree, but are taken because the students are interested in the topic, or the study may be of general use. The main aim is educating yourself.*
3. a) *Controled Study : Courses are controled by demands of the community, society or by the school;*
   b) *Idiosyncrecic Study : It is left to the decision of the student if he/she wishes courses, advice, assignments, etc.*

After this resume Professor Holmberg put forward his question : "What is the position for Africa?"

Before developing a strategy of staff development and the choice of topics for distance education in Africa, this question has to be answered. The answer will lead to the type of courses needed, which will have consequences for the development of staff.

Dr. Hakemulder (Educational & Cultural Task Forces - ECUTAF - The Netherlands) requested to introduce the conference paper - mentioned the use of distance techniques for conferences and seminars. In his opinion Round-Table Talks, as held in Hagen (December, 1981) and Berlin-West (June, 1982) were necessary, but due to world economic recession, decision makers have the responsibility to use development funds as effectively and efficiently as possible. A diagram (page 37 of the Working Paper) was introduced as a model for a "Conference at a Distance".

Since the Addis Ababa International Seminar circumstances beyond control have been the cause of a stand-still in communications on Distance Education in Africa. Dr. Hakemulder praised the attitude of DSE and the Fernuniversität in offering the distance institutions in the African countries South-of-Sahara another opportunity to get things moving. He referred to the widening gap in the development and level of the African institutions and similar institutions in the industrialized world, and also in comparison with other partsof the Southern Hemisphere. Therefore he concluded, that no time had to be wasted.

Based on extensive research, the most important topics for international co-operation were mentioned in a diagram on page 34 of the Working Paper. The author of the document offered three solutions for International Co-operation, the first two being mentioned in the Working Paper :

1. *A CONSORTIUM STRATEGY, as mentioned on page 38 of the Working Paper;*
2. *An AGENCY STRATEGY , as mentioned on page 40 of the same Working Paper.*

The third solution - not mentioned in the Paper - was suggested by Dr. Hakemulder at the conference :

3. *The finalization of a real African DISTANCE COURSE FOR Correspondence Course Writers; the draft had been developed by ECA and had been commented upon by a special international working group during the Addis Ababa World conference in 1979.*

Mr. Chukwu (NTI Kaduna, Nigeria) urged the meeting to use the analysis and conclusions of the Working Paper as a basis for defining the solutions. The meeting, however, decided to list first the problems of the various represented institutions. They were :

i) Staff Development;
ii) Course Development;
iii) Promotion and Information;
iv) Communication procedures;
v) Administration (Management and Planning);
vi) Equipment (hard- and soft ware);
vii) Evaluation and Assesment;
viii) Research.

Dr. Hakemulder reminded the meeting of the very important criteria Prof. Holmberg had presented and therefore he proposed a very simple method to analyse the position of the represented institutions in the context of Holmberg's introduction.

		Etiopia		Ghana		Kenya		Nigeria		Uganda		Zambia		Total	
1.	a.large scale	10	8	10	10	9	9	10	10	8	9	2	2	49	46
	b.Small scale	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	8	8	11	14
2.	a.Degree Study	10	9	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	60	59
	b.Informal Study	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
3.	a.Controled Study	10	9	10	8	10	9	10	9	10	10	10	10	60	55
	b.Idiosyncretic Study	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5

(two estimations from 1 to 10 for now and future)

The result is that for most African institutions we are dealing with large scale, controled degree study, which was following Prof. Holmberg in accordance with expectations for developing countries. He explained that the characteristic for small scale approach is, that author and tutor are combined in one person.

Another diagram showed the experiences in training of the various institutions :

How did you succeed in Training of :	Ethiopia		Ghana		Kenya		Nigeria		Uganda		Zambia							
A. Educational Personnel	before	now	before	now	before	now	before	now	before	now	before	now	+	-	±	0	x	
1. Writers	+	+	+	±	+	±	±	±	+	-	-	-	1	2	3	-	-	
2. Tutors	+	+	+	-	+	0	±	±	-	-	-	-	1	3	1	1	-	
3. Editors	+	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	±	-	0	-	2	4	-	-	-	
4. Counsellors	x	-	+	±	+	0	0	-	-	-	-	+	1	3	1	-	-	
5. Script Writers	x	x	x	x	±	±	0	0	x	0	x	-	-	1	1	2	2	
6. InspectorateSStaff	x	x	+	-	0	-	+	+	0	0	x	x	1	2	-	1	2	
B. Finance/Admin Staff																		
1. Top Managers	+	±	-	-	+	±	±	±	±	±	±	±	-	1	5	-	-	
2. Office Managers	0	0	-	-	+	±	+	+	+	-	+	-	1	3	1	1	-	
C. Supporting Staff	±	±	-	-	0	-	±	-	-	-	±	±	-	4	2	-	-	

+	succeeded, no problems	x	= 0
-	problems	0	= - 1
0	not yet in existence	±	= - 2
x	irrelevant for my institution	-	= - 3
±	limited success	+	= + 3

Analysing the diagram showed the following listing of the problems :

	Quantification	Sequence	Way of solving (assistance)
A. Educational Personnel			
1. Course Writers	- 9	3	International
2. Tutors	- 9	3	International
3. Editors	- 6	6	International
4. Counsellors	- 8	4	International
5. Script Writers	- 7	5	International
6. Inspectorate Staff	- 4	7	Intra African
B. Finance/Admin Staff			
1. Top Managers	- 13	2	International
2. Office Manangers	- 9	3	Locally
C. Supporting Staff	- 16	1	Loc/Intra Afric.

It was decided upon that after training programmes for Course Writers and Tutors there was need for seminars for Top Managers.

In a next session Dr. Heising gave three examples why it was important to strengthen Distance Education :

1. Promotion of Solar Energy;
2. The Introduction of Computers;
3. The need for Environmental Defence

Knowledge and skills could be distributed to the masses by distance education methods. He continued by offering three solutions for the practical outcome of the conference :

1. Better information on Distance Education is needed; therefore DSE will send two books to the participants;
2. In relation to the information needed, DSE is able and prepared to distribute information on Distance education;

3. DSE is ready for 1983 to organise at least one workshop.

Dr. Ansere (University of Lagos, Nigeria) felt the need for organization at the receiving end; he would like to draw attention to the existence of the African Association for Correspondence Education (AACE) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN/ECA). In connection with the AACE the question was either to give up, or to start all over again. Mr. Chukwu offered space in his institution to base a small information centre for AACE if the attempt to revitalize the Association was really serious, which again was highly questioned by Mr. Kweisga (Makerere University, Uganda).

On the Kaduna Workshop to be held in 1983 it was decided on practices, topic, content, organization and finance.

Dr. Heising explained that the policy of DSE is always to collaborate with an overseas organization or institution. In this case the partner would be a national organization such as the National Teachers Institute, Kaduna - Nigeria. He proposed a two-week workshop for about 25 participants : 10 from the host country Nigeria, and 17 from other African countries : the topic being Course Development.

From Dr. Hakemulder's alternatives (page 11/12) the last one was adopted : the use of a correspondence course as a pilot project, before the Kaduna Workshop. Participants bring assignments to the workshop, where the course will be evaluated. Following this the course will be published and presented to all African Institutions, so that in the future they will be able to train authors and tutors.

On request Prof. Holmberg listed the top-ten priority publications on Distance Education, which should be available in all libraries of African Distance Education Institutions. (See : ANNEX II).

Dr. Heising summarized the outcome of the pre-conference. He stated that,in relation to the pilot project of the correspondence course which would be used before the workshop, a lot of organizing still had to be done. He urged the African participants to think about this in the African meetings in Vancouver, so that after that, proposals will come to DSE.

He wished the African participants a good and fruitful time in Vancouver and success at the ICCE Conference.

II. ICCE 12TH. WORLD CONFERENCE

(9 to 16 June, 1982 - Vancouver, Canada)

Professor Bakkshish Singh, President of the ICCE, welcomed the more than 400 participants at the 12th World Conference of the Council. In his address to the conference he thanked the many donors and organizers, who had made the conference possible. Distance Educationa was no longer regarded as a second-rate education, but as a panacea for the global education problems.

The main conclusions from representatives of the various parts of the world were :

1. Latin America , represented with 19 delegates from 6 countries, depending in distance education most on printed materials, some of which are supplemented with radio (not so much by television). Lack of research into efficiency in methods, and in communications were mentioned as major problems. A Distance Education Newsletter had been circulated, but in communications in the Continent one is always confronted with the language problem.

2. For the USA , with 40 to 50 delegates, some basic observations were summed up :
   a. on the one side the institutions were facing severe setbacks in funding, but on the other side parents and students were looking for more economic forms of education;
   b. Distance Education is more generally accepted;
   c. Printed materials are, and will be the basis of distance education.

   "We have been too busy to learn the teachers how to teach; we'll need to know how learners learn".

3. Canada is observing an increase in the variety of media, of collaboration within the country, and of acknowledgement of Distance Teaching.

Research had to be concentrated on obtaining better results, but scarce resources were hampering research projects.

4. Also for the EEC the lack of funds was mentioned. A problem in several countries is to get broadcasting time on television. There is a trend towards more locally based schemes. A new target group is at the moment assisting school leavers who are not to obtain employment, to give them additional training.

5. USSR and Eastern Europe, represented with 4 persons, observed an increasing number of correspondence students.

6. From Scandinavia government and private institutions were represented. In Norway the government pays 85 per cent of the fees for courses and additional costs. However, it is getting increasingly difficult to obtain funds. A growing recognition of distance teaching was mentioned. There is a trend towards more co-operative projects (with universities, broadcasting systems, etc.);

7. Africa makes use of distance teaching for the training of unqualified teachers (on-the-job training), for continuing education, training of literacy teachers, and teaching of science. The Continent is facing serious problems in staff development (management and developing of courses), and in the recognition of distance education by employers. There is a need to control private institutions.

8. Middle East : There is a great interest for Distance Teaching in this region. Especially there is a need for Open Universities for the Palestinians and other Arab groups. The Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) is trying to plan Distance Education Institutions in the area.

9. In South Asia Distance Education has been established widely. There is a need for more regional co-operation : therefore there are plans for an information center (clearing house), combined research projects and a co-ordinating center.

10. Developments with respect to Distance Education in the Far East have been explosive. China (not represented because of examinations of some 80.000 distance education students) is developing distance teaching quickly. The Asian University for Independent Studies started with some 1,000 students and has at the moment more than 300,000 students. Further, the University of the Air of Japan and the Open College of Hong Kong were mentioned. The cha-llenge here will be to overcome the languange problems.

11. Australia : Here university education dominates the discussions :
    a. Non campus education (face-to-face teaching);
    b. Off campus education (distance education techniques)
    There is a significant move to graduate education. Degree courses for distance educators are being developed. Many in-service courses on writing materials and tutoring students are in use.

In his official opening address the Federal Communications Minister Francis Fow talked glowingly of Canada's many experiments in Distance Education. Most are simply promising projects, like the Open Learning Institute and the Knowledge Network of British Columbia.

In the context of the main theme of the Conference : "Learning at a Distance" the person of the learner plays an important role. The leading lecture was held by Kevin C. Smith from the University of New England (Australia) under the title : "Putting the Student First". (see ANNEX III).

The conference book :"Learning at a Distance" (A World Perspective) contains a body of scientific information and thoughts on distance education. It is impossible to summarize the 300 pages of the book and the same is true for the introductions by the authors during the conference. I would like, however, to mention, what in my opinion were the highlights during the plenary and parallel sessions (as far a has been possible to visit) :

1. Desmond Keegan, discussing new trends in Distance Education, stated that it was not correct to confuse it with Educational Technology. As characteristics of distance education he listed :

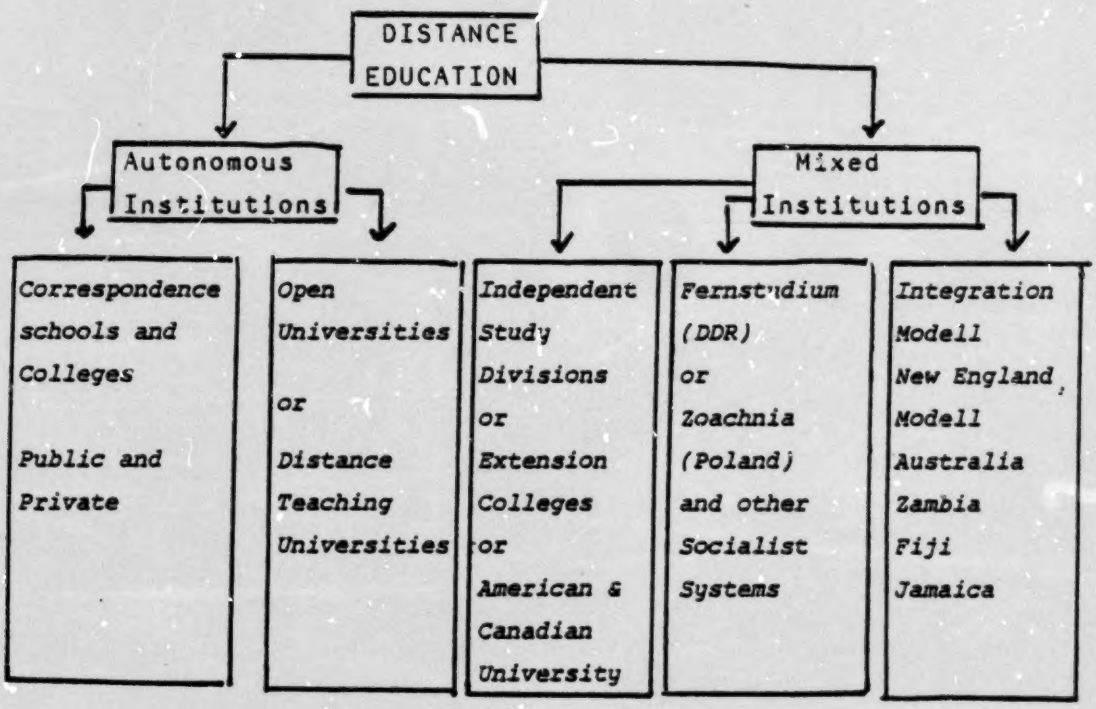
   A. Greater clarity in defining distance education :
      i) the separation of teacher and students;
      ii) the absence of a learning group;
      iii) the existence of two-way communication;
      iv) an artificial pre-fabricated form of education.

   B. Cohesion in the field
      i) the course development process;
      ii) the student support system.

   C. Disparity in the field.

   It is interesting to compare Prof. Keegan's scheme of Distance Education Institutions with the scheme of Holmberg, which was presented at the Berlin Conference. (see page 10).

   Professors Keegan's scheme : on the next page.


DISTANCE EDUCATION
Autonomous Institutions
Mixed Institutions
Correspondence schools and Colleges
Public and Private
Open Universities
or
Distance Teaching Universities
Independent Study Divisions or Extension Colleges or American & Canadian University
Fernstudium (DDR) or Zoachnia (Poland) and other Socialist Systems
Integration Modell New England, Modell Australia Zambia Fiji Jamaica

2. Some very interesting scientific remarks were noted from Professor Otto Peters.
   First of all the awareness of problems in transplanting educational systems and strategies from one culture to the other.
   Secondly his ideas on industrialization. The industrialization in the production of food has enabled most people to survive. Mutatis mutandis, a similar industrialization in education is needed in the global education revolution. To keep away from industrialization is impossible, industrialization will result in democratization in education.
   Distance education, as well as traditional education have to be available and to be developed.

3. In relation to trends in the use of Media, Dr. Bates mentioned the following points :

a. Positive Aspects :

i) costs are coming down;
ii) media are becoming more interactive;
iii) more control to students;
iv) easy for teachers to use;
v) more specific functions for each medium.

b. Negative Aspects :

i) Some new media are still expensive (audio cassettes are cheap);
ii) lack of penetration;
iii) irregular distribution;
iv) lack of equality (there are students who have all machines, and other groups with nothing; a widening gap with developing countries).
v) lack of theory;
vi) jobs changing;
vii) political and commercial dominance.

4. Mr. Xu Yu, a Chinese citizen representing the East-West Research Institute (Hawaii) stated that in China, the political will to develop distance methods had always existed. China established a television programme in 1960. The status of distance education differs from country to country. In China it is not treated as second class. Social structure, the attitude of the policy makers and history have all contributed to that. But history intervened in China's case, before that T.V. university study could establish itself. The Cultural Revolution effectively kept the project from developing until it was re-established as the Shanghai Television University in 1978.

Mr. Yu said that modernization in China has led to a gap in skills. The focus of the Chinese programmes was on technical skills and natural sciences, but they are now adding programmes in liberal arts.

5. Professor Don Swift, on leave from the British Open University to establish an Open College at the East-Asian University in Macao, sees the Chinese problems in a more critical light than Mr. Yu. An entire generation of Chinese people have been left without a decent education because of the cultural revolution. The problem in China is that they do not have the people they need for course development and implementation. They know the importance of distance education and are spending money on equipment. But they don't have the people who know how to use it.
   The Open College of Hong Kong is in my opinion one of the most exciting experiments in distance education at the moment. The traditional institutions in the Crown Colony are quite elitist, said Swift. They do not have high standards and there is an incredible conservatism. The problem is so great that when Swift took on the task of establishing an Open College in Hong Kong he specified that there should be no public funding. Instead all the money is coming from an independent group of Chinese business men.
   There is an enormous need in Hong Kong for training people who can facilitate it's role as the gateway to China; there is need for people who have legal, managerial and communicational skill in large numbers. Social barriers and geography are two problems overcome by distance methods.
   Mr. Swift has accepted the unusual strategy of using distance courses from all kinds of other universities and he seems not to worry about the problems of cultural differences. If his experiment succeeds in this respect and the results are good, then I have the impression that it will be a major break through in international co-operation in Distance Education.

6. The last plenary session again was a high light : Professor Holmberg presented his publication on "Recent Research into Distance Education". It showed clearly how much literature is available on Distance Education. A second edition of this publication will be prepared in a short time.

Some special African meetings had been organised in which elections for the executive of the African Association for Correspondence Education (AACE) took place. Discussions were held about the 1983 Kaduna Workshop.

The content of the course to be mounted at the Workshop in Kaduna should consist of :

a. a correspondence course of 3 packages of three units each of 150 to 200 hours study to begin September, 1982;
b. the face-to-face component which would last for 10 working days (November, 1983);
c. the results of the correspondence component would be reviewed by a committee during the period of the workshop;
d. the conclusions from the correspondence course and the workshop report would supply enough material to enable all African Institutions to train writers and tutors in the future.

In a report prepared by the African participants it is proposed that the entire Kaduna effort should aim at the development in the writers' skills :

a. in motivating the learner;
b. in the selection and formulation of objectives;
c. in effective communication;
d. in sequencing and logical layout of correspondence lessons;
e. in divising self-test items for both formative and summative evaluation;
f. in the use of suitable and effective illustrations;
g. in the selection and use of the appropriate media;
h. in the theory and methodology of programmed learning;
i. in the art of using revision and repetition as a means of feed back;

j. in verbal competence and style;
k. in small steps appraoch;
l. in evaluation of course materials.

(see : page 12 of the Report)

It was agreed upon that DSE be requested to include some African Distance Education experts in the team of resource persons participating in the Kaduna Workshop.

In the last session of the 12th World Conference ot the ICCE (for the future a change in name ICDE - International Council for Distance Education) the President, Professor Bahrshish Singh handed over the leadership of the Council to his successor : Dr. John S. Daniel (Canada).

ANNEX

Deutsche Stiftung für internationale Entwicklung | German Foundation for International Development | Fondation Allemande pour le Développement International | Fundación Alemana para el Desarrollo Internacional

STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR DISTANCE EDUCATORS

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Seminar in Berlin (West)
2 - 7 June 1982

SE 22-56-82

DSE

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SE 22-56-82

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ANNEX 2

Basic literature on distance education

How-to-do-it books:

Erdos, R. (1967) Teaching by correspondence. Paris: Unesco

Holmberg, B. (1982) Distance education. A short handbook with an appendix by J.A. Bååth. Malmö: LiberHermods

General works on distance education

Bååth, J.A. (1979) Correspondence education in the light of a number of contemporary teaching models. Malmö: LiberHermods

Hakemulder, J. (1979) UNECADE. Some thoughts on distance education. Addis Ababa: United Nations (ECA)

Holmberg, B. (1981) Status and trends of distance education. London: Kogan Page

Young, M. et al.(1980) Distance teaching for the third world. The lion and the clockwork mouse. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul

Distance education courses on distance education

Drafts have been developed by various institutions, e.g. in Australia, Norway and the UK (most probably an English course can at the present time be provided by the International Extension College in England). Courses known to be available in 1982 are

Writing correspondence courses (United Nations, ECA), a self-contained course comprising nine units, now available from Educational & Cultural Task Forces, 9218 XC Opeinde (Fr.), The Netherlands, and

Essentials of distance education (Fernuniversität, ZIFF, Postfach 940, D - 5800 Hagen, West Germany). This course, which will be ready for distribution by the end of October 1982, consists of five course units based on a short handbook (Holmberg 1982) and a reader containing extracts from a number of different works on the subject. There is an English and a German version.

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ANNEX 3

ICCE TWELFTH WORLD CONFERENCE

VANCOUVER, JUNE 1982

THE KNUTE O. BROADY LECTURE

"PUTTING THE STUDENT FIRST"

- by KEVIN C SMITH
UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

PUTTING THE STUDENT FIRST : SOME PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES

(subtitle : A Tale of Two Serpents)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Unity in Diversity

In most of our countries, it is a critical time in the development of distance education, critical for a variety of reasons peculiar to local circumstances. Some of us may be returning home from here to plan and/or participate in a bright new era of expansion in distance education; others, on the other hand, may have already enjoyed a surge of exciting activity in recent years but now have little to look forward to except shrinking resources and a fight to maintain the status quo. It is also a critical time for us as members of the ICCE, for the increasing diversity that characterises our membership imposes certain strains on such an organisation as ours. Consequently some reappraisal of the ICCE as it is presently named and constituted seems necessary here this week. In this respect we, therefore, share a common goal which I hope will encourage us to emphasise our similarities rather than our differences and to concentrate upon fundamental issues which can provide a sense of unity that gives meaning and justification to the continuation of this international organisation perhaps in a revitalised form more appropriate to deal with the dynamism of current developments.

The problem of diversity indeed comes home to one who accepts the honour and challenge of the Broady Memorial Lecture. Webster's Dictionary suggests that a key-note address should "present the essential issues of interest to the assembly". Implicit in this definition is the concept that the "assembly" is a homogeneous one and that there are "essential issues" of general interest to us all. The reality is, however, that our interests, our objectives, our experiences, our educational systems, our access to resources and our visions for the future are quite diverse and likely to become more so as we respond to the various challenges posed by the political, social and economic demands of our respective cultures. Consequently, when I accepted the invitation some months ago to talk to you all today, I did so with mixed feelings: firstly, I was delighted to be chosen for the honour and I was encouraged to think that the choice of an Australian reflected the general high regard in which our endeavours in distance education at all levels is held by the international community. On the other hand, I realised that I had been presented with a daunting challenge of attempting to be "of interest to the assembly" and of having something to say that was of relevance to us all in spite of our diversity and in so doing provide a frame of reference within which the following sessions of the Conference might be more meaningfully conducted.

2. Objectives

My message today, is a simple one. It may even be trite. Like any other form of education, distance education (or correspondence education, independent study, home study or whatever you wish to call it), is more likely to succeed if the individual student is made the central focus of our endeavours and we respond to his or her needs not

just as a learner but as a whole person who needs a variety of forms of support in addition to academic guidance. To have it otherwise is to confuse the means with the ends, to get the priorities wrong, or at best, do right things for wrong reasons. So from the outset, may I urge you in your discussions and deliberations here this week to be guided by the principle of "putting the student first".

In my address to you today I have three objectives: firstly, to examine the concept of "student-centredness" in its various forms, to point up some of the dangers we may run into if we exercise too much or too little control of our learners at a distance and, finally, to respond to some questions that I regard as fundamental to the development of a rationale for our particular models of distance education.

II. TOWARDS A STUDENT CENTRED APPROACH

1. A Copernican Revolution

We all know that distance education and other forms of non-traditional education, that is, education that essentially takes place outside of the regular classroom situation, are assuming an increasingly significant position within most educational systems around the globe. There are several reasons for this: the failure of traditional programs and teaching modes to move quickly enough in response to changing educational needs of individuals and groups, the demand for lifelong learning, the democratisation of education and a consequential increase in numbers and categories of educational consumers and a wider acceptance of the use of communications technology. These non-traditional forms represent a conceptual shift from the teacher teaching to the learner learning. Henri Dieuzeide (1970) refers to this shift as a "Copernican" revolution in education. This revolution reflects a movement towards education that is free of time and space constraints and contains many of the elements that our distinguished colleague Professor Charles A. Wedemeyer presented to those of us who attended an ASPESA Forum (a Forum on External Studies under the auspices of the Australian and South Pacific External Studies Association) in Adelaide in 1977 as a rationale for adult learning in the years ahead. (This rationale appears in published form in his newly released book Learning at the Backdoor (1981) which I commend to you.) It contains ten points of which I shall quote the five most pertinent to this discussion:

"1. Instruction should be available any place where there are students - or even only one student - whether or not there are teachers at the same place at the same time.

2. Instruction should place greater responsibility for learning on the student.

3. The instructional system should offer learners wider choices (more opportunities) in subjects, formats, methodologies.

4. The instructional system should use, as appropriate, all the teaching media and methods that have been proven to be effective.

5. The system should preserve and enhance opportunities for adaptation to differences among individual learners as well as among teachers."

Wedemeyer claims that only the first of these requirements (a system that will operate any place, any time, even for one student) is radical in the sense that it is incompatible with conventional teaching. All of the others could be introduced within the present framework of teaching. The first can be accomplished by the use of technology; the others by a combination of technology and modernised concepts or learner-oriented, individualised teaching and learning.

But this is the ideal. What of the reality? Can we in distance education devise cost effective systems that cater for individual student needs or is the provision of an institutional product to whichever customers we can attract the best that we can do? There are dangers in both strategies as I hope the following marketing analogy might show.

2. A Marketing Analogy : Product or Customer Orientation?

a) Marketing Myopia

To some extent, the problems now facing many universities and colleges in the more highly developed countries have been self-inflicted because they have suffered for too long from an insidious disease called "marketing myopia", one which can seriously affect the body corporate and has been known to be fatal if left untreated. The term, of course, is not mine but one coined by Theodore Levitt (1975) of Harvard University for a title to his classic paper that has had an impact on management theory ever since it was published in 1960.

"Marketing Myopia" was Levitt's answer to the question, "How can a company ensure its continued growth?" He urged organisations to define their industries more broadly to take advantage of growth opportunities. Using the archetype of the American railroads, Levitt showed how they declined inevitably as technology advanced because they defined themselves too narrowly. The essential argument is contained in the following quotation from his article:

> "The railroads did not stop growing because the need for passenger and freight transportation declined. That grew. The railroads are in trouble today not because the need was filled by others (cars, trucks, airplanes, even telephones), but because it was <u>not</u> filled by the railroads themselves. They let others take customers away from them because they assumed themselves to be in the railroad business rather than in the transportation business. The reasons they defined their industry wrong was because they were railway-oriented instead of transportation-oriented; they were product-oriented instead of customer-oriented."

Just as the railroads made a mistake of thinking they were in the railroad business instead of the transportation business, so too, most universities and colleges have considered themselves to be essentially, even exclusively, in the business of educating cohorts of 18-25 year olds rather than in the business of education for all who can benefit from it. And in recent years, as the traditional customer diminished they found that they were not in a position to meet the needs or demands of a different clientele.

b) Four Strategies

I am no marketing expert but I can identify at least four common marketing strategies that are open to us as educators (see Fig.1.): first, there is the "marketing penetration" strategy by which the old product is pushed more aggressively to the old kinds of customers. As an example, we might increase our advertising budgets or visit more schools to devise better recruiting procedures for our universities or colleges. A second strategy is "product development", which in an educational context might mean enlivening the curriculum by instructional technology or adapting it to an independent study mode. The third possible strategy is "marketing development", selling the old product (traditional on campus courses) to a new market (say, part-time adult students). The fourth possible strategy is "diversification", devising a new product for new markets. Whilst the last mentioned may appear to represent the strategy most likely to succeed in an ever-changing society by being customer-oriented, it is also the most risky and problematical.

c) Beware the Serpents

This fourth strategy of diversification, reflecting an attitude that puts the student first and institution second and concentrates more on the former's needs than the latter's convenience, is most obviously represented in various forms of "open learning" programs that are open in form, content and process. But as I have already suggested, this path to the extreme end of the continuum of student-centredness or customer-orientation contains traps for the unwary.

In an article entitled "Flexible Space-Time Programs : A Plea for Caution", Stephen K. Bailey (1972) provided an appraisal of the situation in the following terms:

> "The case for adopting flexible space-time programs is impressive. If students of any age, with the help of new educational technologies and support systems, can prepare themselves academically at their own pace in a variety of off-campus as well as on-campus educative settings; if, further, they can demonstrate their academic competence through an assessment of the academic worth of life experiences, and by college-normed examinations rather than by fulfilling traditional residency and class attendance requirements, a lot of lives can obviously be freed up. A lot of academic lock-steps can be broken. Other dividends may ensue: invidious and false

distinctions between "classrooms" and "on-the-job" learning might be eradicated - enabling bridges to be built between hard-hats and long-hairs in our society. Real equality of educational opportunity might be realised whether or not someone has had the good fortune or good breeding (or just plain money) to secure admission to a college campus. The promise is enormous. But alas, at the bottom of this basket of shiny apples lurk some serpents."

The four serpents described by Bailey were:

- the "serpent of academic shoddiness" which could take many forms from one extreme of undue rigidity (credit by exams only) to undue limpness (experiential credit - given for subjectively evaluated learning experiences),

- the "serpent of the garden path" which lured unsuspecting students into the rigours of independent study without adequate educational and psychological support systems,

- the "serpent of fiscal naivety" which suggested that quality education could come cheaply when purveyed off-campus and, finally,

- the "serpent of projected technological miracles" which assumed that academic software would measure up to the miracles of instructional hardware.

Of Bailey's serpents, the serpent of "academic shoddiness" is probably the most to be feared, followed closely by "the garden path" variety. Neutralising both of these creatures may also render harmless the third serpent of "fiscal naivety", because a system which establishes demonstrably sound standards of teaching and student achievement and also reflects a genuine concern for the distant student as an individual just cannot be done cheaply. The serpent of "projected technological miracles" poses a comparatively minor threat once we know how to cope with the other three.

What Bailey didn't mention about his serpents is the fact that the serpents of "academic shoddiness" and "garden path" seem to work in tandem. I have concluded they are generally so located that if we move outside the striking area of one we are in danger of coming within the range of the other. Avoiding the twin serpents then becomes a matter of occasionally treading a middle path or at least avoiding extreme positions when choices have to be made on fundamental issues.

And what, do I think, are these fundamental issues and what are the choices available to us? That we choose differently from among the options explains our diversity; that the fundamental issues can be reduced to a few explains the commonality of interests that bring us together this week. The issues, the options and the possible consequences of the strategies chosen can be illustrated in schematic form. (See Figure 2)

III. EXPLORING THE OPTIONS

1. The Twin Serpents

By positioning the serpents as I have, I am suggesting that if a traditional institution with an academically accepted product decides to adopt a strategy of market development by selling an old and tested product to a new market, then it is well on the way to avoiding the stinging criticism of "academic shoddiness" but remains vulnerable to criticism of leading its new customers "up the garden path" of academic unpreparedness. Conversely, if a new institution is established to develop a new product for customers previously not catered for by existing educational programs (the fourth strategy of diversification) then it has a better chance of providing an appropriate product for the market (avoiding the Serpent of the Garden Path) but it is faced with the task of convincing the community at large and professional colleagues in particular that the new product will compare favourably with more traditional approaches.

The schema itself indicates some of the typical characteristics that might be ascribed to institutions or systems that could be said to represent extremes of product orientation and customer orientation. It is of course a caricature, rather than an accurate representation of reality.

2. Some Fundamental Issues

a) Mainstream or Backdoor?

Let us, for example, suppose that an institution, say a university or college, has an acceptable program previously taught to on-campus students and now decides to adapt it to an external mode for off-campus students, in other words, sell an old product to new customers. As an established institution with a traditional curriculum it can claim to be "in the educational mainstream" (at Point A on Continuum AB), the safest place to be as far as avoiding claims of academic shoddiness, especially if the same academic staff that teach on-campus students teach these new customers and assess them on the same criteria. I generally call this an "integrated model" (Point C on Continuum CD) as opposed to having separate academic staff to teach externally which I call a "dual model". And although the integrated model brings with it problems of staff development to cope with the special demands of distance teaching and the need for a high degree of organisation to support the academic process if we are to avoid the Serpent of the Garden Path, it does have the very powerful advantage of avoiding the odious comparisons that are inevitably made when there are two distinctly separate groups of teachers involved for each of the two modes.

Conversely, if it is decided that a void in the educational system needs filling by creating a new institution to develop custom-tailored or student-centred programs for a new clientele, the problem of status rears its ugly serpentine head. For it is the reality that non-traditional learning in such a context is seen to be "learning at the back door", a metaphor coined by Charles Wedemeyer in a

sympathetic vein but one which nonetheless he chose to heighten "our perception of the discrimination inherent in a front door-back door world of education" where, as he puts it, "people of quality use the front door; lesser folk carry out their tasks at the back door" and "different values (are) attached to the learning activities carried out at each door". Any institution, therefore, that is established outside the mainstream (Point B on Continuum AB) to provide non-traditional programs to non-traditional students in a distance education mode (Point D on Continuum CD) just has to work that much harder to gain general acceptance. It can be done and has been done and we shall look at how it can be done in due course but it might be useful to quote here the words of Dr. D.B. Varner, former President of UMA (The University of Mid-America), a well-known experimental television-oriented consortium based in Lincoln (Nebraska) but serving several states. Dr. Varner, (1976) apparently not one to mince words, had this to say at a conference several years ago:

> "We're working on pay-dirt but had better watch out. The dangers of poor quality are very real and the regular academic faculties could hang us on this issue. There's a high degree of fragmentation in the field - everybody's doing something but the diversity has its dangers. And we are much too separated from the mainstream of higher education which we'd better figure out how to rejoin." (My italics)

I look forward to the time when non-traditional learning opportunities and non-traditional learners of today are seen to be a legitimate responsibility of our educational systems so that there is no need for a back door. But we have to educate the educators first before such a vision materialises.

b) How Much Student Autonomy

The next continuum of institutional control and student autonomy is probably the one that is the most crucial in determining what kind of distance education system each of us will develop.

At one end of the continuum, (Point E) distance education can be developed with very tight control where curricula, the start and end of the academic year, assignment deadlines, compulsory forms of face-to-face contact at prescribed times, broadcast programs and other pacing mechanisms are determined by the institution concerned. At the other extreme, (Point F) we have many variations on the theme of student centredness where the individual is helped by a mentor to take responsibility for his or her own learning by determining long range goals and drawing up a formal learning contract outlining a program of study to meet these goals. The student may fulfil the contract through a variety of learning experiences: formal course work at a college, independent study by correspondence, courses through newspapers, television and radio, independent research, field work, internships, overseas travel and so on. Alternatively, previous experiential learning may be taken into account. Not quite so close to the end of the continuum is that kind of distance education system that has a set program for which students may enrol at any time, learn at their own pace and be assessed when they consider they are ready for it.

This question of institutional control and student autonomy is an important one for determining our respective philosophies on course design and is most relevant in discussions about the qualitative nature of the learning process that we want to develop in our students to which I shall refer later. For if the course is designed and structured so meticulously that the learner has no choice in what he learns or how he should learn it, then at higher levels of education especially, we can be vulnerable to the criticism of academic shoddiness for inhibiting creative thinking and critical analysis. If we do attempt to provide the complete learning package that is to be digested in modules "to be taken as prescribed", then we need to be aware of the possibility of two negative consequences: firstly, students may be conditioned to accepting whatever we prepare for them as the last and only word on the matter concerned, without searching beyond the course material for other analyses and interpretations; secondly, we may be ignoring the fact that students themselves (especially mature age students with rich and varied life experiences) can inject something very positive into a course given some freedom of choice in their sources of information and learning strategies. In an attempt to counter what is seen as an overly authoritarian approach to instructional design, I have to say that I have heard in recent times a call for more use of that sometimes forgotten learning medium, a list of reference books!

There is, of course, no perfect blend of student autonomy and institutional control because there is no one "right" way that will be appropriate in all circumstances. There is one message though that our serpents at the top of the schema are meant to remind us about: that is, the more control we exercise as teachers and administrators the more likely we are to lure students into programs and learning situations that are unsuitable for them and the Serpent of the Garden Path will strike; conversely, the more responsibility we give to our students for their individual learning programs, the more difficult it will be for them to gain general recognition of their achievement, or in metaphorical terms, avoid the Serpent of Academic Shoddiness.

c) Who Shall be Responsible?

The next continuum (GH) raises issues that are also central to the development of a successful model of distance education for the question of who assumes responsibility for the total educational processes that our students experience is a critical one.

Finding the answer is more difficult if our model emphasises those characteristics which in Peters' terminology (1971) represent "the most industrialised form" of education, a description that denotes a division of functions, production line techniques and mechanistic delivery systems. (Point G) Such a model, where the production of course materials and the tutorial support for these materials are distinctly separate functions for which different personnel are responsible, is more the norm that the exception these days. On the face of it, this model has all the hallmarks of a product oriented system. And there are real dangers in this if this form of industrialisation is not tempered by a cohesive and effective system of student support. For division of labour means division of responsibility and answers have to be found to such questions as:

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- Who is ultimately responsible for the product?
- What kind of teacher-student relationships does the system generate?
- Who will care for the students, not only as learners but as whole people with individual characteristics and problems?

In large scale enterprises such as the U.K. Open University where course production is the function of central academic staff and the interpretation of the product to the customer is in the hands of remote part-time tutors, the matching of teaching processes with the objectives of course producers presents a critical challenge. The O.U. has met the challenge by developing a sophisticated infrastructure of regional offices, tutorial services and an elaborate information system. What a pity that the importance of this student support network has sometimes been obscured by a preoccupation with course design and delivery on the part of those who seek to transplant such complex enterprises into different cultural settings!

The extreme alternative to sharing responsibility for product and process as on point G is to make fulltime teaching staff responsible for the total teaching process (including such functions as course design, course writing, two-way communication with students through assignments, forms of direct and indirect personal contact and interactive media, as well as final assessment of students and course evaluation). This is a model (Point H) that is most familiar to me at the University of New England. To some extent it could be argued that control by central teaching staff over the whole teaching process suggests that an institution is customer-oriented because it is reluctant to share responsibility for the academic progress of their students with others; on the other hand it may also indicate a concern for preserving the integrity of the product.

To be perfectly objective, one must also be aware of the risks involved in such a model for so much depends on the commitment of staff to the enterprise, their other responsibilities if they are teaching in two modes, the organisational support provided and the expertise that is available to induct staff who are unfamiliar with distance teaching into its mysteries. In short, "total responsibility" can have both positive and negative connotations. It can be a strategy for avoiding both serpents but if it goes wrong, both staff and students can fall victims. I believe that in the Australian context of universities and colleges where distance education operations are on a comparatively small scale (say from 1,000-6,000 students) most models would find a place on the continuum closer to Point H than Point G for we are inclined to hold the view that the fewer people we put between fulltime teachers and their students the better. Whilst functions can be, and often have to be, shared, responsibility for the teaching-learning process needs to rest fairly and squarely on someone who can be readily identified and referred to for remedial action when things go astray as they surely will from time to time.

At any place on this continuum one can never feel entirely safe from either of our twin serpents. Neither complete teacher autonomy over the product and process nor a separation of functions will produce a perfect package that will allow all students to study independently of teachers (at least at advanced levels), for individuals respond to teaching strategies in a personal and idiosyncratic way. David Sewart, formerly Assistant Director of Regional and Tutorial Services for the O.U. and now Regional Director in the North West Region, provided some food for thought in an article he called, "Distance Teaching : A Contradiction in Terms?" (1981) which appeared in Teaching at a Distance recently. He pointed out there that:

> "The standard teaching package, however well structured, cannot provide an individualised learning system for students. It is only the introduction of a human element which can adapt to the almost infinite variety of student needs".

In David Sewart's terms, the human element takes the form of what he calls "intermediaries" or tutors who are best placed to reconcile the authoritarian nature of product-oriented, institutionally controlled teaching with the individual needs of a student learning alone. Indeed, he goes so far as to claim that:

> "The success of the Open University does not rest wholly or entirely on the highly structured teaching package. It rests rather on the interrelationship of that package with the student as an individual through the agency of the counselling and tuition functions peculiar to the Open University".

d) How Much Interaction?

In this sense, the issue in question brings us to the next continuum of "independence and interaction" where the choices to be made are concerned with determining the right synthesis between those activities in which the student works alone and those which bring him into contact with other people. "Getting the mixture right" (as Daniel and Marquis (1979) so succinctly described this process in a paper of the same name) represents one of the central educational dilemmas for distance educators. The dilemma, as I see it, lies in the fact that distance education depends essentially on an independent learning situation and must be designed so that the individual student can plot his own path through a particular course with a minimum of outside assistance. On the other hand, systems which rely solely upon the stamina, perseverance and intellectual capabilities of its students to survive the rigours of isolation really cannot expect to escape the fangs of the Serpent of the Garden Path.

Oddly enough, in our attempts to devise that mythical and elusive study package which will make the learner independent of any need for direct contact with a teacher or fellow students, many think we are putting the student first and are customer oriented but in reality we can only be producing a product for some hypothetical stereotype. Responding to needs of real students as unique individuals requires refinements and adaptations that I believe can only be truly effective through a variety of interactive elements or forms of immediate two-way communication.

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Interactive elements can take many forms and do not necessarily imply face-to-face meetings. Daniel and Marquis use the term to cover "those activities where the student is in two-way contact with another person (or persons) in such a way as to elicit from him reactions and responses which are specific to his own requests or contributions". Interaction over telecommunications systems would clearly qualify on this criterion as would the more obvious elements of personal contact of tutoring and counselling, discussion groups, residential and weekend schools and staff visits to students in their home areas. I can only touch upon this theme here but I am pleased that the importance of "the human touch" in distance education will be receiving the attention that it deserves in this Conference if the advance papers and the program outline are any indication. (My own University's response to this challenge of "getting the mixture right" is examined in more detail in an article in the Conference Papers which my colleague Ian Small and I have written, entitled "Student Support : How Much is Enough?".)

What kind of "mixture" between independence and interaction one chooses to develop will depend upon a multitude of factors, not the least of which scale and financial resources will play a part. But if more philosophical rather than pragmatic reasons are to guide our deliberations, may I draw your attention to another fundamental question we need to ask ourselves: "What kind of learner or learning do we expect our programs to produce?".

e) <u>What Kind of Learner</u>?

On reflection, I think that much of our difficulty in communicating in a meaningful way with one another is caused by the fact that there is a wide variety of learners or learning that we hope our respective programs will produce. Seldom do we take the time to explain this to our colleagues, so it is little wonder that we are too often guilty of talking <u>past</u> one another instead of <u>with</u> one another.

The subject of "What kind of learner?" has many implications for those of us charged with the responsibility of developing an educational philosophy and an operational blueprint for distance students. I cannot hope to explore the question fully here but I would like to mention the work of Baath and Griffin, who have something relevant to say to us about the <u>quality</u> of learning from two distinctly different viewpoints.

Many of you will be aware of John Baath's excellent overview of the literature of distance teaching, teaching theory and educational psychology in which he employs seven of the best known models of teaching to describe and analyse the methods of teaching at a distance. (Baath 1979) (This is contained in a book entitled "<u>Correspondence Education in the Light of a Number of Contemporary Teaching Models</u>" and you can read a critique of the book by Michael G. Moore in Vol. 2, No. 1, 1981 of ASPESA's journal called <u>Distance Education</u>.) The analysis was applied, however, to what we might call a "pure correspondence education" model where only postal two-way communication in the form of tutor-marked assignments supplemented printed teaching material. Interactive elements such as face-to-face contact, telephone teaching and computer aided instruction were not included.

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If one accepts for the moment this traditional and narrow view of correspondence education (which I might add is bedevilling us with regard to the name of this organisation), Baath's findings are interesting. The author sums up his analysis this way:

> "All of the models chosen - Skinner's, Rothkopf's, Ausubel's, Egan's, Bruner's, Rogers' and Gagne's - were found applicable to pure correspondence teaching. However, the models appeared to vary in the extent to which they could be applied naturally and smoothly. This is, among other things, related to the views of the goals that teaching/learning should have and of how strictly controlled the students' work towards these goals ought to be. The stricter the control towards fixed goals, the easier apparently is the application of the model to correspondence education."

He also suggests that:

1. Models with stricter control towards fixed goals also imply a greater emphasis on the teaching material than on two-way communication.

2. Pure correspondence education seems well adapted to teaching that is directed towards cognitive goals of the verbal information or intellectual skills type but learning of attitudes and motor skills require a higher degree of face-to-face contact. (my italics)

If I interpret Baath correctly, his studies endorse much of what I have been saying: that our respective places on the various continua of the schema, especially where we are seeking "the right mixture" of independence and interaction, should be determined with the nature and quality of learning that we hope to develop in our learners as the guiding principle. It also seems reasonable to infer that our expectations of "deep learning" (to use Gibbs' terminology (1980)) and the development of critical thinking at an advanced level in our students are more likely to be realised if a blend of interactive elements can be incorporated in the total educational package. To produce such learners though we are faced with another challenge: how to develop learners who are neither too dependent (on the teacher) nor completely independent. Should we be working towards a state of "interdependence"? I think we should and so does Virginia Griffin who has been working mainly in the field of self-directed adult learning at OISE (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education).

In a paper delivered in a seminar in Pewaukee, Wisconsin in 1977, entitled "Self Directed Adult Learners and Learning", Griffin (1977) pointed up the diversity of experiences which might be regarded as self-directed learning and the need to provide plentiful options from which such learners can choose. The role of the adult educator then becomes a different one but in some ways more demanding, for to surrender control over content and the learning process to individual student choices runs counter to professional teacher instincts. The aims are

then to help students become and stay responsible to themselves, maintain and increase self-esteem, recognise their own strengths, skills and needs, trust their own energies and intuition, deal with confusion and ambiguity, clarify what they want to learn and be able to relate to others in group situations.

Paradoxically Griffin's "deepest fear" in all this, to use her own words, was "that in our attempts to lead people out of dependent relationships with us as teachers, we will envision the new goal to be independent learners. For ourselves it would mean there would be not work of much meaning to us. For learners it would mean very improverished learning." In her view, interdependence or mutuality of decision-making, of discovery, of learning, is a more advanced state of development and can generally be reached only after a person works through stages of dependence and independence.

I am not sure how we as distance educators can enjoy such an apparently perfect teacher-learner relationship, but we should at least be aware of the state of perfection to which we might constantly aspire. I suspect that again we must strive to offer more than "pure" correspondence education (as defined by Baath) to our customers and that we must weigh carefully the pros and cons of various scales of operation so that a delicate balance can be achieved between economies of scale and the practicability of achieving meaningful personal relationships or to use Griffin's other term, "mutuality" in the learning process. In this context, "small may be beautiful" and instead of governments setting up one national institution to cope with educational deficiencies en masse, they could give more consideration to developing new programs for new clienteles within their established institutions, thus remaining in the mainstream, offering a variety of programs and study modes and providing learners of high quality that have had a blend of independent and interactive learning experiences.

It is, of course, possible to design and conduct courses in the distance learning mode which encourage interdependence between teachers and students. One such project, for example, described by David Boud (1981) in an article he called "Independence and Interdependence in Distance Education", is a postgraduate diploma in science education at the Western Australian Institute of Technology (WAIT) wherein students are required to set their own objectives, plan their own programs, identify and use the resources of others and evaluate their own performance. The course is jointly designed and conducted by staff and students and the students are involved in teaching and learning from each other. It interested me to note in the report of the project, the author had this to say:

> "The course design must be sufficiently flexible to accommodate a wide range of needs and objectives but it must also offer tangible forms of support and encouragement to help maintain morale and commitment during what can be difficult times." (my italics)

And these, remember were postgraduate students. How much more in need of "support and encouragement" are those with limited educational experiences!

I would hope that the messages of Griffin and Baath might help us to counter the arguments of those who wish to measure educational outputs in distance education only in quantitative terms with little regard for qualitative aspects. In short, we should not be asking only the question of "how many graduates?" but also "what kind of learners?" when we talk about our students.

3. Two Profiles : One Philosophy

Before leaving the schema altogether I should like to end my Tale of Two Serpents by showing how two totally different organisations have trodden different paths to avoid the serpents but in the end reached something of a consensus about thinking of students as people and not merely as learning mechanisms. We can do this by locating each of these institutions on the continua.

The University of New England, for example is in the mainstream of university education in Australia, it adopted an integrated model (indeed it was the first university in the Commonwealth and perhaps elsewhere to require its professors to teach in two modes) and has always maintained tight institutional control over the product. So far it qualifies as a very product-oriented institution at points A, C and E, quite safe, I believe, from the Serpent of Academic Shoddiness but not sufficiently student-oriented to avoid the Serpent of the Garden Path. In response to this danger, it decided it would encourage academic staff to interact with students in a variety of face-to-face situations to facilitate the development of positive teacher-student relationships. Its path, therefore, when plotted moves sharply to the right of the GH Continuum to Point H and then somewhere back to the centre of the IJ Continuum. Its profile then takes on the following shape:

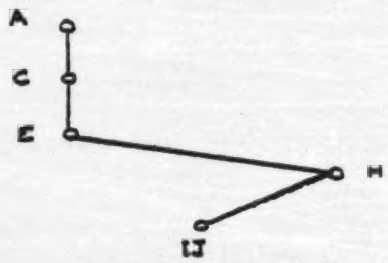

Fig. 3

The U.K. Open University has almost the opposite profile. Established by the Labor Government of the day more than a decade ago to respond to a call for more open access to university education for part-time adult students, it stands apart from the mainstream of traditional universities preoccupied with the education of selected students entering straight from school. While its scale of operation hardly earns the label of "back door learning" its open admission policies and other features places it closer to Point B than Point A. Since it is exclusively concerned with the external mode it sits comfortably on Point D. Unlike many other open learning programs, however, the U.K. Open University, aware of its proximity to the Serpent of Academic Shoddiness (after

all, how could it demonstrate the quality of its product compared to other universities?) decided to adopt tight institutional control over its product by incorporating a unique systematic approach to course production through course teams and external assessors. Some student input into the final product was made in the form of feedback from pilot studies. Thus on the EF Continuum, the OU moves close to Point E and because of its "industrialised" course production methods and its reliance on a multi-media approach, clearly finds a place at Point G on the GH Continuum. So far the only common point shared with the University of New England is Point E but the two institutions also agree on a blend of independence and interaction even though one, the OU, generally has to use intermediaries in the form of tutors and counsellors to provide most of the personal element so necessary for all but the very independent and determined external student.

The OU profile then assumes almost the reverse image of the New England profile thus:

Fig. 4

In other words, both have found it necessary in an attempt to appease both serpents to avoid being exclusively product-oriented or customer-oriented. Furthermore, what does not show up on the profiles is the fact that both institutions, despite their differences in scale (6,000 compared to 70,000 students) and the degree of sophistication in their delivery systems, opted for the creation of an organisational structure that would be responsible for ensuring that interactive elements of the systems functioned as smoothly as possible. At New England, we have the Department of External Studies, a Sydney Centre and regional advisers; at the UKOU there is the very impressive and crucial network of support from Regional and Tutorial Services. Most of our distance education systems recognise the necessity for such support but by no means would they all be able to claim that they have given this the priority it requires.

IV. CONCLUSION

Student-Centredness : A Personal Interpretation

Because learning is a personal idiosyncratic activity and because quality of learning is important for so many of our students for whom "non-traditional learning in the lifespan" will form their staple educational diet, our wits and our resources must continually be channelled into improving both product and process. Indeed, these are but two sides of the one coin, for the product (consisting

of course materials in different media) must be designed and delivered in such a way that the learning process is as rich and stimulating as it can be for the individual student. For most of us, "putting the student first" probably means in practical terms finding ways of delivering a product that is essentially designed for a hypothetical "average customer", to meet the individual needs of our real customers, needs that include the social and psychological as well as the educational.

Transforming the mass produced product (or product for the masses) to meet individualised needs is an act that if successfully achieved can be compared to the wonders of alchemy in turning base metals into gold. In our context of distance education, I believe that the necessary alchemy can be provided only by a rich variety of interactive elements, for these in the right blend are capable of transforming even inanimate or sterile learning packages into vital dynamic relationships with academic mentors and supportive peers and peer groups.

Whilst much can be done to ensure that our course materials themselves require students to interact with them as if they were tutorials-in-print or, to use Borje Holmberg's well known concept, "didactic conversations" (1977), personal interaction in its more direct forms can achieve more than merely adding another dimension to learning experiences. What it can do, and indeed generally does do, is to develop a special relationship out of which commitment on both sides is strengthened. There is, for example, no more decisive way that I know to convert the sceptical or uncommitted to the unfamiliar challenge of distance teaching than to expose him or her to a group of highly motivated mature aged external students in a discussion situation. And once mutual respect is established between people, whether they be teachers or learners or peers in search of the same educational goal, then it inevitably follows that communication between them at a distance by letter, telephone or assignment becomes easier, more natural and constructive.

Responding to individual needs in distance education is still possible, however, even if direct face-to-face contact cannot be arranged or it is considered inappropriate for various reasons. Communications technology already allows us to reach out to our students in a variety of interactive ways. The Serpent of Projected Technological Miracles (to which Bailey referred but I have not discussed until now) is unlikely to affect us if we think of using technology not so much as an alternative strategy to interacting with real live teachers but as an aid to personalising the teaching-learning process.

Once we think of using technology in this student-centred way, even the most conservative of us must welcome any future developments that will reduce the negative effects of distance in distance education. Indeed, distance, like beauty, may eventually exist only "in the eye of the beholder" in educational terms as interactive elements enable us to move closer to that ideal relationship of interdependence between academic mentor and learner.

Though such a relationship may present to some of us a glimpse of the Garden of Eden, let me remind you that the most subtle of all serpents once lurked there too. It seems, therefore, that student-centredness in any form will always need to be approached with a certain amount of caution. But the ultimate learning relationship is worth seeking.

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Figure 1.

FOUR MARKETING STRATEGIES

	Product		Customer
MARKETING PENETRATION	old	→	old
PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT	modified old	→	old
MARKETING DEVELOPMENT	old	→	new
DIVERSIFICATION	new	→	new

Figure 1.

SOME FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES

Serpent of the Garden Path

Serpent of Academic Shoddiness

PRODUCT ORIENTED

CUSTOMER ORIENTED

A	In the Mainstream	⟷	At the Backdoor	B
C	On/Off Campus Integration	⟷	Off Campus Exclusively	D
E	Institutional Control	⟷	Student Autonomy	F
G	Shared Responsibility	⟷	Total Responsibility	H
I	Independence	⟷	Interaction	J

Independent Learner → Interdependent Learner ← Dependent Learner

Figure 3.

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND PROFILE

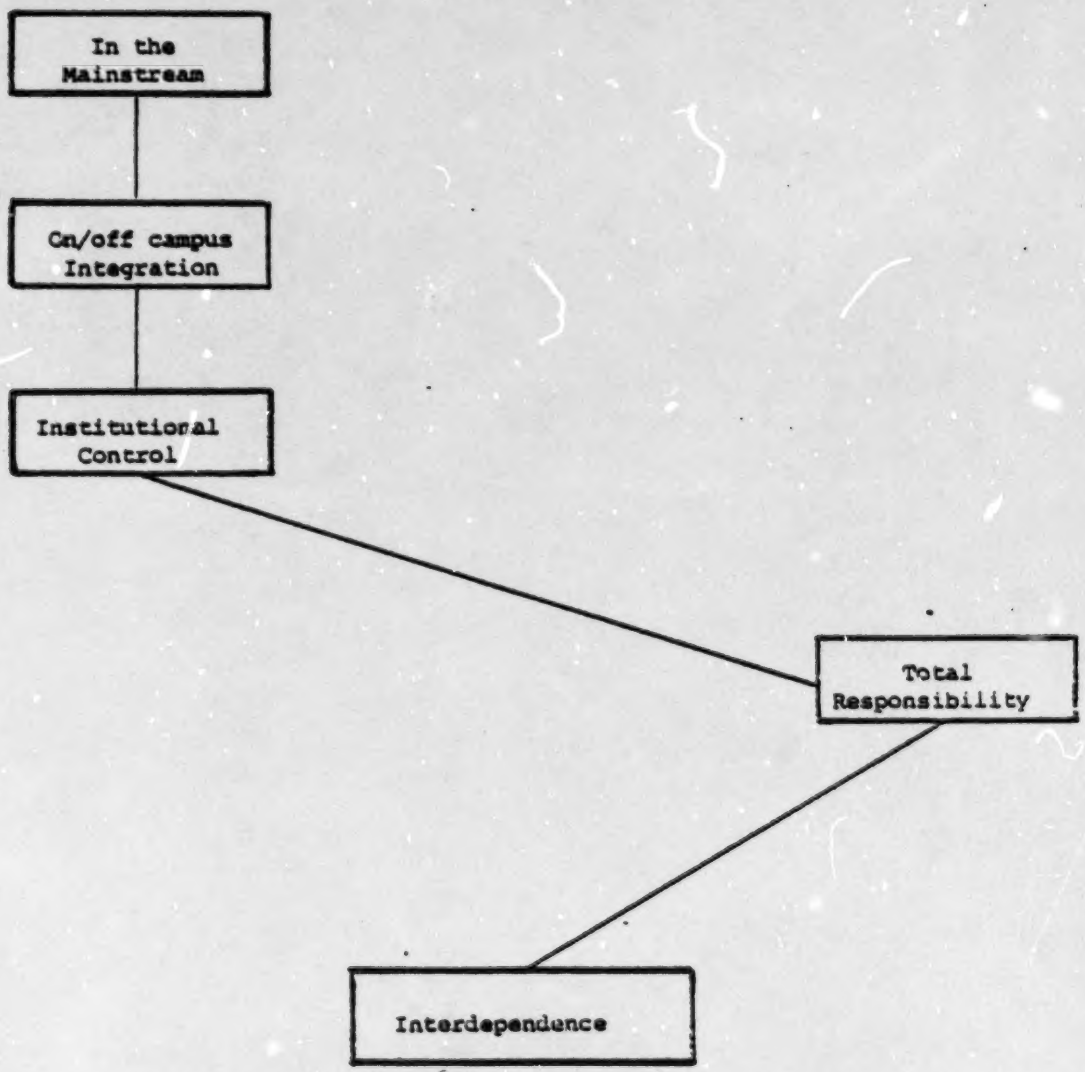
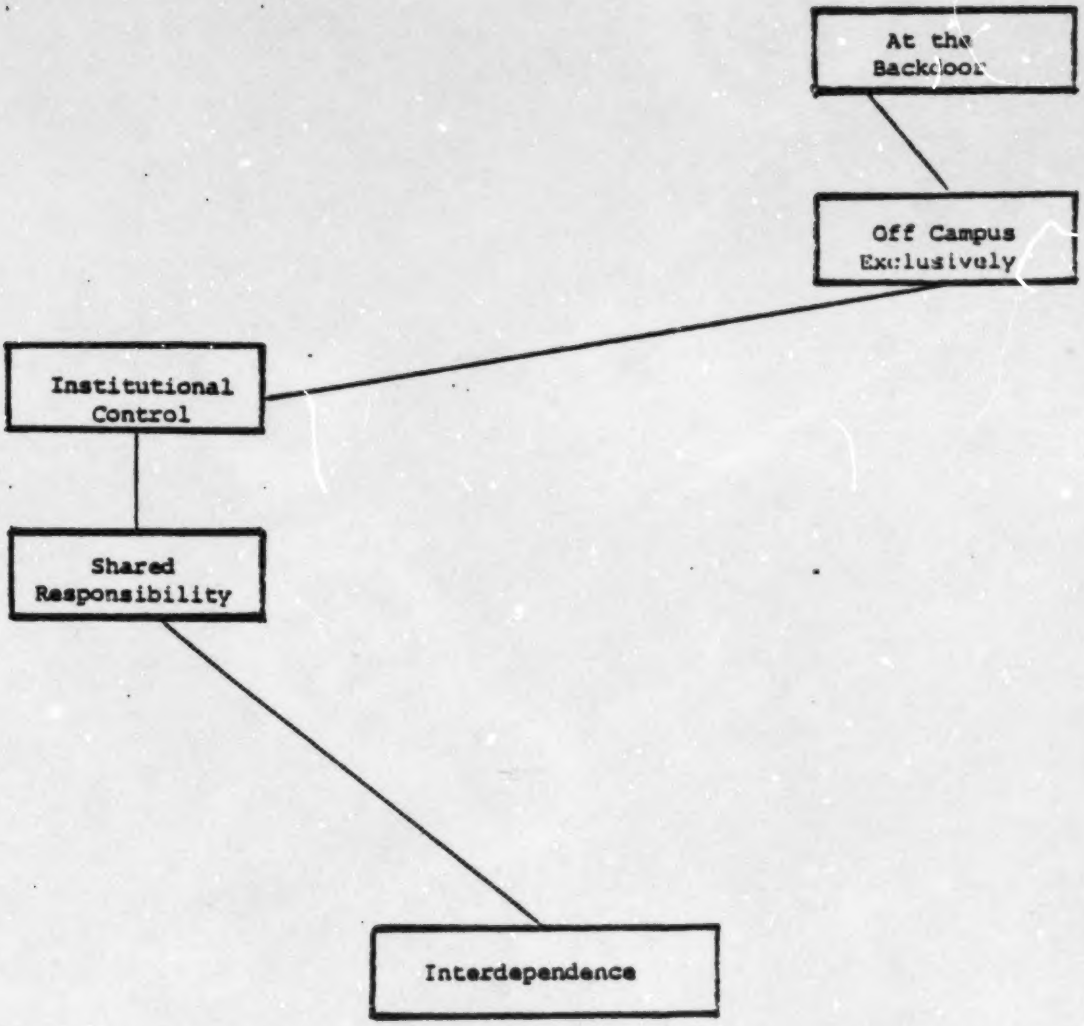


Figure 4.

U.K. OPEN UNIVERSITY PROFILE



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